

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 247545
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DRAFTED BY EA/K:JLGOSNELL:JCM
APPROVED BY EA/K - MR. RICH
EUR/SOV - MR. MATTHEWS
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TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY KABUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 247545

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, PEPR, KS, KN, UR, CH

SUBJECT: SOVIET VIEWS ON THE KOREAS

REF: MOSCOW 23177

1. KOREA AFFAIRS DIRECTOR MET 26 SEPTEMBER WITH SOVIET
EMBASSY COUNSELOR V. I. TRIFONOV FOR PERIODIC EXCHANGE
OF VIEWS ON KOREA-RELATED QUESTIONS. TRIFONOV, WHO HAS
JUST RETURNED FROM HOME LEAVE AND CONSULTATIONS IN MOSCOW,
WAS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY FORTHCOMING IN DISCUSSING SOVIET
VIEWS OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA.

2. WITH REGARD TO THE RECENT VISIT OF THE ROK MINISTER
OF HEALTH TO THE WHO MEETING IN ALMA ATA, TRIFONOV
INSISTED THAT THERE HAS BEEN "NO CHANGE IN SOVIET POLICY."

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PAGE 02 STATE 247545

HE RAISED NO OBJECTION, HOWEVER, TO THE POINT THAT SUCH A
DEVELOPMENT IS CONDUCIVE TO GREATER STABILITY ON THE
KOREAN PENINSULA, AND ACCEPTED OUR PROFFERED SAMPLES OF
FAVORABLE KOREAN PRESSPLAY WHICH ENSUED FROM THE VISIT.

3. WITH RESPECT TO DPRK-SOVIET RELATIONS, TRIFONOV
EXPLAINED THAT TWO FACTORS HAD LED TO THE RECENT

COOLING:

(A) MOSCOW BELIEVES THAT THE KOREAN PENINSULA IS NOW RELATIVELY STABLE AND OTHER ITEMS RATE HIGHER ON THE KREMLIN'S AGENDA;

(B) THE USSR DOES NOT WISH TO TAKE STEPS WHICH COULD DESTABILIZE THE SITUATION JUST TO GAIN INFLUENCE IN PYONGYANG. (NOTE: THIS IS A SUMMARY OF A LONG STATEMENT, THE CLEAR IMPLICATION OF WHICH WAS THAT MOSCOW DID NOT TRUST WHAT KIM IL-SUNG WOULD DO WITH MORE WEAPONS.) HE SAID THE NORTH KOREANS RITUALLY CITE U.S. MILITARY SUPPORT TO THE ROK IN ORDER TO PRESSURE MOSCOW FOR FURTHER MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

4. TRIFONOV VOLUNTEERED THAT KIM IL-SUNG WILL DEFINITELY NOT BE VISITING THE SOVIET UNION THIS YEAR. HE SAID THAT EVEN THE NORTH KOREAN INTEREST IN SUCH A VISIT HAD WANED CONSIDERABLY SINCE EARLY 1978.

5. TRIFONOV STRESSED SEVERAL TIMES THAT THE PRIMARY SOVIET CONCERN ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA IS TO AVOID ANY DESTABILIZATION OF THE SITUATION.

6. WITH RESPECT TO U.S.-ROK RELATIONS, TRIFONOV EXPRESSED INTEREST IN STATE OF PLAY OF FORMATION OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 247545

COMBINED FORCES COMMAND (CFC) AND OF POTENTIAL SALES TO ROK OF F-16 AIRCRAFT.

7. COMMENT. GIVEN THE AGING SOVIET LEADERSHIP AND THEIR NEED TO DEVOTE ATTENTION TO OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, WE ARE NOT SURPRISED AT A DESIRE TO WANT THE KOREAN PART OF THEIR LONG BORDER AS QUIET AS POSSIBLE, EVEN IF NORTH KOREA'S DRIFT TOWARD CHINA IS A CONSEQUENCE. TRIFONOV OMITTED SPECIFIC MENTION OF SOVIET DENIAL OF KIM'S REQUESTS FOR ADVANCED WEAPONRY, BUT THAT MESSAGE WAS APPARENTLY WHAT HE WANTED TO CONVEY. WE WERE, HOWEVER, SOMEWHAT SURPRISED BY THE FRANKNESS AND OPENNESS OF TRIFONOV, WHO ALWAYS SEEMS WELL-BRIEFED IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, BUT WHO HAS HERETOFORE NOT BEEN FORTHCOMING ON SOVIET-KOREAN ATTITUDES. CHRISTOPHER

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FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 247545 ACTION SEOUL MOSCOW INFO TOKYO
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